



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Coeur d'Alene Field Office
3815 Schreiber Way
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83815
<http://www.id.blm.gov/offices/coeur>



In Reply Refer To:
1792/6711 (410)

June 18, 2008

Dear Interested Party:

This request for scoping comments is being sent to you because the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Coeur d'Alene Field Office (CdAFO) is preparing an environmental analysis for the Coeur d'Alene Field Office Vegetation Treatment Program. This analysis will cover all 96,898 acres of public lands managed by the BLM CdAFO.

Purpose and Need

The vegetation treatment program would provide the CdAFO with management tools and guidelines for control of weeds and vegetation treatments to maintain and restore ecological conditions using methods described in the 2007 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) – Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States. The program will describe the conditions and limitations that apply to vegetation treatment methods at the local level in support of the 2007 Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan Record of Decision.

A vegetation treatment program is needed to protect, maintain and improve ecosystem health. An integrated weed control program would prevent and control non-native noxious and invasive plant species. Vegetation treatments implementing herbicides would reduce hazardous fuels and/or improve forestland health. The objectives of the proposed treatment activities are to:

- Protect ecosystem function and biodiversity of the CdAFO lands by preventing the spread of non-native noxious and invasive plants
- Implement an early detection/rapid response program to eradicate new invaders that have not become established in the CdAFO area
- Eradicate or control non-native noxious and invasive plant species in areas that are considered infestation pathways in the CdAFO (e.g., roads, trails, recreation sites, waterways, burned areas)
- Reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire
- Improve forest and ecological condition
- Provide benefits to fish and wildlife habitat

Proposed Action

The BLM has been mandated under a variety of statutes and policy initiatives to increase the number of acres of vegetation treated annually to address the issues of invasive species, hazardous fuels, vegetation condition and their relationships to habitat improvement and maintenance of healthy landscapes. The purpose of the proposed action is to provide effective weed control efforts combining weed prevention techniques with appropriate treatment methods including herbicides, biological controls, mechanical methods and/or hand-pulling, along with an inventory and monitoring program. The proposed action also proposes to reduce hazardous fuels and improve ecosystem health by treating vegetation with herbicides. These vegetation manipulations would also benefit fish and wildlife habitat, improve riparian and wetland areas, and improve water quality in priority watersheds. No aerial treatments will be considered.

Issues and Concerns

The following list of potential issues has been identified by the BLM Interdisciplinary Team that will be preparing the environmental analysis for the proposed CdAFO Vegetation Treatment Program. Additional issues identified during internal and public scoping will be considered in the development of the environmental analysis and the alternatives.

- Fisheries & Federally Listed Fish - analysis will determine the potential for herbicides to get into water and the possibility of impacts to fish. This analysis will be tied to water quality. The analysis will also look at the benefits of treating invasive species in riparian areas.
- Wildlife & Federally Listed Animals (including sensitive species) – analysis will include the possibility of health effects (especially amphibians) from herbicides.
- Migratory Birds – analysis will include the possibility of health effects from herbicides.
- Federally Listed Plants (including sensitive species) – analysis will focus on the benefits and risks of vegetation treatments and emphasize actions that will support conservation and recovery of species and minimize risk of exposure.

We welcome your comments on this proposal. If we do not receive a response from you, we will assume you have no further interest in this project. Comments need to contain the following information.

1. Your name, address, and (if possible) telephone number, and organization represented (if any).
2. Name of this project for which you are submitting comments (EA for the CdAFO Vegetation Treatment Program).
3. Additional key issues and concerns, and specific facts and supporting reasons that you feel should be considered in the environmental analysis and decision.
4. Additional alternatives or management opportunities that should be considered.
5. Any other additional comments you may wish to submit on the proposal.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can

ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Issues and comments should be mailed to Doug Evans at the address shown on the letterhead; sent by facsimile to (208) 769-5050 or emailed to douglas_evans@blm.gov by July 17, 2008. Please enter "EA for the CdAFO Vegetation Treatment Program" in the subject line when submitting facsimile and email comments. If you have questions regarding this proposal, please contact Doug Evans at (208) 769-5020.

Sincerely,

/s/ Eric R. Thomson

Eric R. Thomson
Field Manager